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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Monday, July 20, 1936.

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Hello Folks: It is said, on good authority, that vegetables constitute more than 30 percent of the food supply of the average American family. If you were told that your food supply would be cut 30 percent you would consider it a great hardship, especially if the reduction deprived you of all of your vegetables. That is exactly what has happened in many parts of the drought-stricken area where the gardens are burned to a crisp. No doubt many of these families have a supply of canned vegetables left over from last year, or are in position to purchase canned tomatoes, beans, peas and other vegetables on the market.

During the past two weeks we have received a great many letters asking for suggestions as to what can be planted during the remainder of the season for fall and winter vegetables. All depends upon how many days you can count upon before the first killing frost, and the moisture supply. If you folks living in the drought area get enough rain within the next two weeks to really put moisture in your soil you can plant snap beans, spinach, kale, beets, turnips, carrots, and in some cases sweet corn will mature, although 70 days without frost is considered the shortest period for bringing a crop of sweet corn to the edible stage. Let me give you this thought; in planting late summer vegetables always plant early or quick-maturing varieties.

For example, Refugee Wax is an extremely early bush bean that is ready for use in 50 to 52 days after planting while the old Refugee or 1000 to 1, sometimes called "Late Refugee" requires 70 days for the production of pods. The names you will note are very much alike.

Sweet corn may still be planted in many sections, and the question of variety is very important. Stowell Evergreen and Country Gentleman both require in the neighborhood of 110 days to mature edible roasting ears while some of the earlier varieties will mature in 75 to 85 days when grown late in the season. Here around Washington we can figure on frost catching our gardens any time after October 10th, but as a rule we do not get a killing frost until after October 20th. Counting from today we have 12 to 13 weeks, or 84 to 91 days remaining this season during which to grow crops in our gardens.

For those of you who may expect frost any time say after September 10th, it would be useless to plant sweet corn, tomatoes or lima beans this late in the season. You can doubtless grow a crop of snap beans by planting the varieties that mature in 45 to 55 days. It is an old saying that you should "plant turnips the 25th of July, wet or dry." I am afraid that would not hold good for some sections this year where the ground is so dry that beans will not sprout. Spinach and kale are two of the leafy vegetables that you can grow during the late summer and early fall. You

folks who live in the south can go on planting and growing all of the more hardy vegetables all winter. Your only problem is the moisture supply and keeping down the grass.

Speaking of moisture supply, things are getting pretty all-fired dry right here at Washington and I am watering my garden to keep it alive and growing. Incidentally I find that a moderate amount of water, properly applied, will go a long way toward producing a crop and one of the problems I have is to get people to run the water around the roots of the plants where it is needed and not sprinkle the tops. Where the water is applied to the roots very little is lost from exposure to the air and evaporation. Certain garden crops like sweet corn and tomatoes send their roots long distances in search of meisture and so require that the entire surface be watered, but where the supply of water is limited there is much to recommend the practice of letting the water flow through little furrows alongside the rows of plants. Covering the wet soil with dry soil after watering will prevent loss of moisture, or where barnyard cleanings of fine manure of any kind is available a mulch of this material around the plants will aid very materially in conserving moisture and keeping the plants growing.

Weeds draw very he avily upon the moisture supply in the soil and for that reason no weeds should be allowed to remain in the garden. Weeds should not be tolerated under any circumstances and especially when they are robbing the crops of much-needed moisture. The heat and drought are not going to last indefinitely and my thought is that many of us have good fall gardens if we will be all ready to plant certain of the short-season crops just as soon as the rains do come, or it might pay to anticipate the rains somewhat and in case there is a prospect of soil moisture go ahead and get the seeds in the ground. I understand that rains have fallen in the Great Lakes region and with the water of the lakes well warmed you folks who live in that region should be able to count upon a growing season extending well into October. I try to practice what I preach, in a way at least, and so I am going right on planting beans, corn, turnips, and other fall crops in my garden.

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